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ART AND BOOK SALE CATALOGS—The American Art News, in connection with its Bureau of Expertising and Valuation, can furnish catalogs of all important art and book sales, with names of buyers and prices, at small charge for time and labor of writing up and cost of catalog when such are de luxe and illustrated.

VIOLET OAKLEY'S PANELS

One Phila art writer, marvellous to relate, has the courage to adversely criticize Miss Violet Oakley's turgid, and colossal, unimaginative and uninspired part of the series of eight panels already placed in Harrisburg and entitled: "The Creation and Preservation of the Union," recently shown at the Pa. Academy.

The subjects of these panels are the "Little Sanctuary in the Wilderness," and the "Slave Ship Ransomed." The first illustrates the Quaker legend of the latch string, an example of force dominating faith in principle; while the second illustrates the Quaker legend of the Friend, who hearing that a slave ship had arrived in port, hastened to the dock, bought all the slaves and shipped them to Nova Scotia, where they were to be free.

"As one remembers Miss Oakley's former decorations," says the art writer for the Phila. Inquirer, "they were much more torrid, though at once more sober, than these. Entering the room containing the panels for the Governor's Room, one had the same overpowering sensation of smothering, struggling, aggressive heat as comes from the wearing of heavy woolen underwear on a sudden hot day in spring. All other aspects of the case are subdued by this one great hot fact of Indian red and yellow all over the place.

"Never a colorist, the painter has roused herself to the supreme effort to catch some brief reflex of the modern movement, not to be totally left behind in the train of progress. Her new panels are decidedly bright in key with plenty of gilt and a lot of explanatory text in black.

"But however apt the all too wearisome text may be, it is upon their merits as paintings that Miss Oakley's panels must, in the final reckoning be judged, and as paintings, alas, how far do they fall short of those qualities which one likes to see made permanent in public places. Through all the effort at a rebirth in the matter of the palette, the pernicious Pyle influence persists, that literal dreadfulness, outlined in black that was the master's stamp upon the individuality he so lightly crushed in its formative state. The literal dreadfulness is there, in the new Oakley panels, but Miss Oakley has gayly departed from her preceptor's heavy, customized fidelity to dreary facts and gives instead something braver, because more frivolous, in gross caricature of the types represented on so large a scale."

[It has been reported that Miss Oakley has said, "she departed from the late Edwin A. Abbey's original design as to these panels," the series of which he began and which she—unfortunately, it seems to us—was chosen to complete. Shades of Abbey! What would he have thought of this last performance of Miss Oakley's.—Ed.]

A WAITING ART MARKET

After the marked revival in the art trade and in public interest in art that followed the coming of peace, and which, after the Christmas-tide lull, was stimulated by the astonishing success of the Clarke portrait sale and the news of several private transactions pending, there has been a slight reaction the past ten days, and the art market may be best described in the language of Wall St. as a "waiting" one.

It should not be or deserve that term, for not in many years has there been as good an opportunity for intelligent and clever collectors and buyers to acquire works of value and importance—aside from their worth as an investment. The close of the war has naturally forced some collectors and owners to sell, even at a sacrifice, and many others to feel like disposing of their art possessions, in whole or in part, for a profit—and the galleries and appraisers' offices are besieged with applications from owners wishing to dispose of pictures, furniture, porcelains, bibelots, etc.

This state of affairs will change as quickly any day as the war closed, and we advise would-be purchasers not to delay in at least visiting the art houses and selecting what pleases them, for when the change comes, and the present waiting market becomes an active one, the great opportunity now afforded will have passed.

CORRESPONDENCE

Twachtman's Grave Neglected

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS,

Dear Sir:

It has been brought to my attention that the late John H. Twachtman, whose works I greatly love and admire, rests, apparently forgotten by the world, in a sunken and unmarked grave in the little cemetery of Greenwich, Conn.

Surely every one who has been permitted to see nature through the eyes of this poetic painter, and especially those fortunate ones who can commune with his spirit daily through exquisite works in their own collections, will be touched by this pathetic neglect of a friend to whom we owe so much pure aesthetic enjoyment.

It seems only fitting to me that a fund be raised to insure the marking of John H. Twachtman's last resting place in a suitable manner, consistent with the respect and gratitude due him from the world. To this end I enclose my check for \$25, and solicit your co-operation to the fullest extent of your influence as publisher of the only art newspaper in America, in establishing, collecting, and applying such a fund to the creation of another shrine of art.

Assuring you a very great appreciation of your interest and assistance, I am,

Yours very truly,

Paul Schulze.

Chicago, Ill., Jan. 20, 1919.

[We greatly appreciate, as will the many friends of the regretted artist and the host of admirers of his art. Mr. Schulze's generous thought and plan, and we will be pleased to receive and credit subscriptions of any amount, no matter how small, toward a fund sufficiently large to properly mark the last resting place of John H. Twachtman.—Ed.]

Those Independence Hall Portraits

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS,

Dear Sir:

In view of the letter in your issue of Jan. 11 from Mr. Edward Biddle of Phila. in regard to the Independence Hall portraits as to their commercial value, permit me to say that it is impossible to place a commercial value on public collections. They are not, and never can be, for sale.

Some ten years ago at the request of the then Mayor, Mr. Reyburn, I valued the collection of Independence Hall, the authorities having in mind a comprehensive valuation of all property belonging to the city of Phila. My appraisal for the collection then was \$260,000. In the last ten years portraits of the character in the collection have increased in value 100%. This fact is unimportant as to this, or any other, public collection, except to bring home to the public the importance of carefully conserving property of real value and of a character that cannot be replaced.

Very truly yours,

Phila., Jan. 21, 1919. Albert Rosenthal.

AN OPEN LETTER

To One of the Advisory Board of
"The Society for the Promotion of Social
Decay"

Cher l'Ami Fritz:

I see your distinguished and justly respected name, with others almost as eminent, dragged into the mire as one of the Advisory Board of the "Society for the Promotion of Social Decay." I cannot believe that your name was used with your permission, unless you are ignorant of the character of the previous exhibitions of this society and of the forces which control its activities. I presume the "glittering generalities" of "liberty," "independence," "square deal," etc., appeal to your characteristic good nature, which caused you to be called "l'Ami Fritz." Perhaps you are like some "captains of industry," too busy to investigate questionable corporations, to which, as an act of friendship to some individual, they lend their names as directors. I cannot believe, if your name is used with your authority, that you saw the previous demonstrations by this society, of how low some things that call themselves artists can sink. It is as if Mr. Vanderlip allowed his name to go on the list of Board of Directors of "The Universal Gold Brick Corporation, Unlimited," or "The International Society for the Conversion of Garbage into Radium," or if, inversely, he had put on his Board of Directors in the City Bank, "Dopey Ben," "Bathhouse John" and "Jack the Ripper."

An Attractive Prospectus

The prospectus of the society is attractive, the paper and print and its arrangement beautiful. With the present price of such paper, I presume this is made possible by certain auriferous petticoats.

The hatred of the academic and the love of liberty make strange bedfellows. We find under the same blanket saints and sinners, friends of democracy and anarchists, patriots and traitors, constructive economists and murderous Bolsheviks. Just as we find, with the evil forces of disintegration, great and good men like Tolstoi and Prince Kuropatkin, men of lofty ideals with love of liberty, and of human rights, but so near the borderline which divides genius from insanity that they advise non-resistance to evil and the abolition of all laws. They are more dangerous than the looters. Is your attitude analogous to that of these noble, unbalanced men? Benedict Arnold was one of the most picturesque and most heroic figures in the American Revolution until, treated shabbily by an ungrateful Congress, he turned traitor. That you were treated shabbily in your early career by the powers that govern art matters, is no justification why, in these your days of honor and achievement, you should turn traitor to art by promoting through the prestige of your name, the things for which this society stands and not for what it claims to stand, all of it backed by its spiritual kin of art criticism. Let us stop calling a cancer an ulceration, stop calling tuberculosis bronchitis, insanity, nervous prostration. Let us call a spade a spade right here, and not mince matters, and not be deterred by the inevitable shouts of thieves yelling, "Stop, thief!" Let us say openly what is whispered amongst artists, what it is that speaks from some canvases on these walls. Let us not be affected by the universal cowardice about disgusting topics.

An Offensive Exhibit

Let me speak of one of the offensive exhibits (by no means the worst) which had a conspicuous place in the last show. It was an "arrangement," in which the motive was a model who had forgotten to take off her union suit (noble theme, lofty conception of art, of independence and of liberty!), and in which the several unlovely utilitarian flaps were employed to make a "pattern." Such a motive does not rise to the dignity of being immoral, it has not the spice of being "naughty." It only brings art into contempt. There is nothing immoral about a barroom cuspidor on a cold, gray morning after New Year's night. But to paint it and exhibit it would be an insult to art and to every lover of art, and by lover I do not mean "chippy-chaser" of art. And when, under the sacred names of independence and liberty, such things are presented to the public, they outrage not only art, but liberty and independence. The liberty of nasty little boys, who make it necessary for the owner of an artistic entrance to a city house to board it up when the family goes to the country, of whom some would say: "Don't interfere with the lads, their dirty little drawings and their scurrilous puerile words may be the forerunners of genius." This witless joke was reproduced in the Sunday art sections of the papers, not as a joke but with the approval of the Greenwich art critics.

Decency and Art

What has decency to do with art? As well ask, what has honesty to do with the cashier if he is only quick at figures and at making change? It is the most dishonest and stupidest of all art sophistries. That question paralyzes many helpless tongues. To the "great stupidity" it seems unanswerable. Liberty! Aesthetic liberty does not differ

from religious liberty. If a man wants to worship the sun or the sacred bull, that is up to him, but when he says it is thwarting the will of God to save a dying child, the authorities arrest him for criminal neglect. We cannot dictate to the "Holy Ghosts" of "art for art's sake," pitter-patter for pattern's sake, but when art teaches that it cannot create a genius, without letting the child of art sink into the cesspool, the contempt of a wrathful public opinion steps in and says: "Better no art!"

With the record of their two exhibitions, to speak of the "new era" of "reconstruction," when their every effort is destructive is shameful effrontery, an insult to those to whom art is something more than the "liberty" to be disgusting, more than independence of the eternal standards of good and evil, which standards have nothing to do with changing methods.

The man who has just been laid to rest beneath the towering pine said: "Let us pay with our bodies for our soul's desire." Shall we allow it to be turned into: "Let us pay with our souls for our body's desire?"

As ever, with much respect,

Sincerely yours,

N. Y., January 20, 1919. Charles Vezin.

A Tribute from the Lambs

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS:

Dear Sir:

We are pleased to enclose check for subscription for 1919 and at this time to write a word of appreciation of the AMERICAN ART NEWS.

This we consider the best art paper in this country, in that it gives the news which all interested in art are desirous of having and at the same time does not thrust unduly on its readers its personal opinion or dictum in regard to art.

With best wishes for the success of your publication in this great year of Victory and Peace, believe us,

Very truly yours,

N. Y., Jan. 22, 1919. J. and R. Lamb.

Results of an Art News Adv't.

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS:

Dear Sir:

I request you to discontinue my adv't for the etching press. I succeeded in getting what I wanted. Had no idea The Art News would reach such remote corners of the U. S. A. I appreciate the number of answers I got in response to my adv't.

A. N. Lindenman.

Allentown, Pa., Jan. 20, 1919.

Who Is "Schrier"?

Modern paintings, the collection of the late John W. Sterling, sold by order of his executors at the Hotel Plaza last evening, brought \$25,420.

A "Schrier," "Arabian Horsemen," No. 65, of an agreeable size, 19 x 32 inches, brought the highest price of the evening, going to Clapp & Graham for \$5,500.

—N. Y. "Times," Jan. 18.

OBITUARY

John Walter Scott

John Walter Scott, known to all stamp and coin collectors, died at his N. Y. home, Jan. 13, aged 75. He was born in England, came to this country in 1863, and began his stamp collecting business here four years later. His private collection, sold some years ago, was said to be the finest in the world. He was president of the Scott Postage Stamp & Coin Co.

Major Charles F. Cook

Major Charles F. Cook, who had been serving as purchasing agent for the Ordnance Department of the U. S. A., died Wed., Jan. 1, at St. Luke's Hospital of pneumonia. Major Cook was born in Knoxville, N. Y., in 1884, was graduated from Cornell, and later took a special course in engineering at Princeton.

He went to Turkey some years ago in charge of an exploring expedition to unearth Sardis, an old capital city which stood in the time of Alexander the Great, the material discovered being deposited in various museums in this country.

John Wenger's Decorations

In connection with Prizma pictures at the Rivoli Theatre, John Wenger has recently painted a series of appropriate decorations which adorn the walls. These constitute groups of figures painted with the luminosity and charm of color that always typify his work. "The Life of a Man" is of especial interest. In action and general composition it tells its story and reveals the message intended by the artist in an aesthetic though comprehensive manner. In addition, there are several screens, brilliant in tone with imaginative motifs, that greatly enhance the furnishings of the attractive rest room on the second floor. His stage settings are also noteworthy. His decorations for the Petrushka Ballet, which will open at the Metropolitan Opera House in February, have recently been placed. He is now holding an exhibition at the Rochester Museum.